



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DUKE!

This, the third part of Duke Ellington's birthday dance in McElroy's Ballroom, Portland, Oregon, begins with Mercer Ellington's time-honored blues, **Things Ain't What They Used to Be**. In the absence of Johnny Hodges, for whose alto it was long a showcase, an unusual cast of characters step up to the mike. First is Russell Procope, then Willie Cook and Britt Woodman, each taking two choruses, and last that arresting, marathon soloist, Paul Gonsalves, who takes no less than ten while the band wails behind him.

The Hawk Talks was written by Louis Bellson, but in this case it is his successor, Butch Ballard, who gets an extensive work-out on it. Those familiar with Bellson's version will find this one more rugged, less sophisticated so to speak, but rhythmically satisfying. Cat Anderson and Ray Nance lend helping hands in the third and fourth choruses. **C Jam Blues** is another familiar Ellington vehicle for exciting improvisation. Different sequences of soloists were deployed on it through the years and here they are, in order, the piano player, Nance (violin), Cook, Gonsalves, Jackson and Hamilton (clarinet). **Tenderly** would later become one of the most popular features for Hamilton's impeccable clarinet, but here a chorus by the leader precedes three by Willie Cook. Like Britt Woodman, Cook is presented to very good advantage on these recordings. His strong playing, bristling with ideas, has a personal quality that is both incisive and eloquent. The arrangement, complete with stirring trombone backgrounds, is the same as that on the more familiar Hamilton versions.

Bebop seldom raised its head so extensively in Ellington's world as it does on **All the Things You Are**, where Rick Henderson gives "his conception", for some

three choruses, of Jerome Kern's number, perhaps as Charlie Parker might have limned it. Ellington's own introductory chorus is rather more extraordinary. He was certainly having fun on this birthday!

Solitude was one of his big successes in 1934 and the crowd's frenzied recognition testifies to its enduring popularity. Good-looking Jimmy Grissom sang ballads in a way that appealed strongly to the ladies, but he also sang street-wise blues that stirred both sexes, as, for example, on **She Moved**. Ellington sets the tempo and the whole band falls to, or, as they used to say, gets in the groove, and rocks the buildin' and floorful of dancers. Grissom rides confidently with the band, singing with an abandon that recalls Joe Turner and Jimmy Rushing. Ray Nance has three mean, meaningful choruses, Quentin Jackson and Jimmy Hamilton one each, and then there's Cat Anderson to shout Grissom home. Ellington responds to the charged atmosphere by calling for an encore. This time, it doesn't quite come off. Grissom's voice is shot and Hamilton's tenor doesn't register so well here, but Cat Anderson continues to scream happily in his blue stratosphere.

At this point, the band gets to play **Happy Birthday**, not for its leader, but in honor of a lady present. Then, without announcement, and probably in answer to a request, it delivers **Mood Indigo**, with solos by Procope, Cook and the pianist.

It is nearly time to go. Ellington leads his four "phenomenal trumpet players" into a climactic round of competitive solos on Mary Lou William's arrangement of **Trumpet No End**. Nance comes first, then Cook, Terry and Anderson. Now Ellington is thanking people, advising a forthcoming Earl Bostic engagement, and the band is signing off with **Satin Doll**, till this time next year, till the maestro's next birthday.

STANLEY DANCE

author of The World of Duke Ellington

(Da Capo Press)

MONO • 15 785

Happy Birthday, Duke!
Duke Ellington and His Orchestra

DUKE ELLINGTON, piano

WILLIE COOK, trumpet

CAT ANDERSON, trumpet

CLARK TERRY, trumpet

RAY NANCE, trumpet, violin & vocal

BRITT WOODMAN, trombone

QUENTIN JACKSON, trombone

JUAN TIZOL, valve trombone

RUSSELL PROCOPE, alto sax & clarinet

RICK HENDERSON, alto sax

PAUL GONSALVES, tenor sax

JIMMY HAMILTON, clarinet & tenor sax

HARRY CARNEY, baritone sax & bass clarinet

WENDELL MARSHALL, bass

BUTCH BALLARD, drums

JIMMY GRISSOM, vocal

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LASERLIGHT

Duke Ellington and His Orchestra 3

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DUKE!

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------|----|--|--------|
| 1 | THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY
USED TO BE | [8:00] | 7 | SHE MOVED | [7:40] |
| | (MERCER ELLINGTON/TED PERSONS, 1953) | | | (DUKE ELLINGTON) - <i>FAMOUS MUSIC</i> | |
| | <i>TEMPO MUSIC</i> | | 8 | HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU | [0:22] |
| | | | | (P.S. HILL/M.J. HILL, 1893) | |
| 2 | THE HAWK TALKS | [3:08] | 9 | MOOD INDIGO | [5:51] |
| | (LOUIS BELLSON) - <i>TEMPO MUSIC</i> | | | (DUKE ELLINGTON/IRVING MILLS/
ALBANY "BARNEY" BIGARD, 1931) | |
| 3 | C JAM BLUES | [5:04] | | <i>FAMOUS MUSIC/MILLS MUSIC</i> | |
| | (DUKE ELLINGTON, 1942) | | 10 | TRUMPET NO END | [3:35] |
| | <i>EMI ROBBINS</i> | | | (BLUE SKIES) | |
| 4 | TENDERLY | [3:35] | | (IRVING BERLIN) - <i>IRVING BERLIN MUSIC</i> | |
| | (JACK LAWRENCE/WALTER GROSS, 1946) | | 11 | TAKE THE "A" TRAIN | [1:00] |
| | <i>EDWIN H. MORRIS</i> | | | (BILLY STRAYHORN, 1941) - <i>TEMPO MUSIC</i> | |
| 5 | ALL THE THINGS
YOU ARE | [4:55] | | | |
| | (OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II/JEROME
KERN, 1939) - <i>POLYGRAM INT'L</i> | | | | |
| 6 | SOLITUDE | [2:17] | | | |
| | (DUKE ELLINGTON/EDDIE DE LANGE/
IRVING MILLS, 1934) | | | | |
| | <i>FAMOUS MUSIC/MILLS MUSIC/SCARSDALE MUSIC</i> | | | | |

PRODUCED BY DUKE ELLINGTON

LICENSED FROM MERCER ELLINGTON

LINER NOTES BY STANLEY DANCE

COMPILED AND EDITED BY RALPH JUNGHEIM

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Photo courtesy of Michael Ochs Archives

This is the third volume of five **HAPPY BIRTHDAY
DUKE!** collections, which also include Laserlight
CDs 15783, 15784, 15786 & 15787.

LASERLIGHT®
DIGITAL

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MONO

ALL SONGS ASCAP



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Happy Birthday, Duke! The Birthday Sessions 3

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